

"Love, Loyalty and Redemption"

RUTH LESSON 2

*"Know that the Lord, He is God;
It is He Who has made us, and not ourselves;
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture." Ps 11:3*

DAY #1 Prayerfully read through the book of Ruth in one sitting.

Write down a title for each chapter and a specific verse that the Holy Spirit impressed upon your heart during your time of study.

Chapter 1

Title

Verse

Chapter 2

Title

Verse

Chapter 3

Title

Verse

Chapter 4

Title

Verse

DAY #2 Read Ruth 1:1-2 again.

- 1) According to the first part of verse 1, what is happening in Israel at this time?

Knowing the cycle Israel found themselves in during this time in history, I feel it is safe to say that not only were they suffering a physical famine in the land but a spiritual one as well.

- a) What are some causes that can lead to “spiritual famine”?
- b) What is the only solution?
- c) Describe a time when you personally experienced a “spiritual famine” and how God delivered you.
- 2) Who are the main characters thus far?

Look up their names in a Hebrew concordance/dictionary
(if you don't have one you can use www.blueletterbible.com type in the desired word and make sure “show strongs” is checked) The number following the word will assist you in locating it in the concordance.

- a) Elimelech H458
- b) Naomi H5281
- c) Mahlon H4248
- d) Chilion H3630

From these definitions, we can get a pretty good idea of the types of people they were.

3) Where were they from?

Look up Bethlehem H1035

a) Read John 6:35, and 48

Spend a little time here and compare/contrast what is happening in Bethlehem “the house of bread” to what “the Bread of Life” has to offer.

4) Where did they go?

Look at the map. Notice that Bethlehem is smack dab in the midst of the Promised Land.

Read Gen 26:3-5 and 28:13-15

Elimelech would have been very familiar with these promises made by God.

a) What was Elimelech’s first mistake?

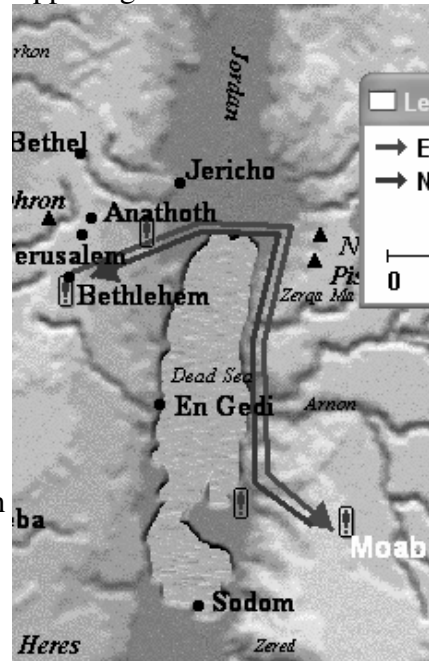
Read Deuteronomy 23:3-6

Elimelech would have also been very familiar with this command.

b) What was his second mistake?

5) What did they do there?

What does Psalm 1:1 say about this?



So, we have Elimelech, “God is King” taking his “amiable and pleasant” wife, Naomi, and the two “sickly and failing” kids, Mahlon and Chilion away from the House of Bread to a “forbidden” place called Moab because God wasn’t providing how they wanted and

when they wanted. Wow! Prayerfully consider this and spend some time with the Lord, meditating on how this might apply to your life.

CHALLENGE

What do the following verses say we are to do when in want and or need:

Ps 37:3-8

Ps 55:22

Spend some time in the Word and write down any other verses that apply.

DAY #3 Read Ruth 1:3-5

Yesterday we saw the sin of Elimelech in leaving the Promised Land, crossing over the Jordan and remaining in Moab.

1) According to Scripture what does God say about sin?

Galatians 6:7-8

Numbers 32:23

- a) Are there any sins in your life right now or sins from the past that you have buried in hopes that no one, including God will find out about?

Between you and the Lord – Read Psalm 139. Spend some time at His feet and receive the Grace and Forgiveness He has for you if you will just ask.

2) What happened to Elimelech in verse 3?

3) According to verse 4, **when** did the sons take wives?

4) What were the names of the wives?

5) Look up the names:

Orpah H6204

Ruth H7327

6) How long did they live in Moab before Mahlon and Chilion died according to verse 4?

7) Read verse 5.

Put yourself in her shoes and summarized what has happened to you over the past 10 years.

What would you do next and why?

When we are outside of the will of God, He will do what ever is necessary to bring us back into fellowship with Him. Yet even in the midst of trials and tribulation if we are God's kids we will see His benevolence, grace and mercy. God's unfailing love for us is manifest daily in our lives regardless of circumstance, if only we have "spiritual" eyes to see...

DAY #4 Read Ruth 1:6-7

- 1) What did it take to convince Naomi to return to Bethlehem?
- 2) Who was behind her desire to return to the “House of Bread” according to verse 6?

According to the Targum, an Aramaic translation or paraphrase of a portion of the Old Testament – in this case the book of Ruth, Naomi heard “by the mouth of an angel” that the Lord had visited His people by giving them bread. Interesting thought to be sure.

So often our desire to return to a right relationship with the Lord is preceded by a lack of communing with him, a dry spell, a spiritual famine or drought. Some how or another the Lord made known to Naomi that it was time to come home for the famine was over. Literally in Bethlehem, and it was time for it to end in her Spiritual life as well.

- 3) Why does the Lord allow famines, trials and or tribulations into our lives?
 - James 1:2-4
 - Romans 5:3-4
 - 1Peter 1:6-7
 - Job 23:10
- 4) How has the Lord worked in your life, personally, to reveal to you the need to end a spiritual famine, trial or tribulation?
- 5) How did this draw you into a deeper relationship with Him?

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written:

*“For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”^o*

*³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8:35-39*

Many times the Lord allows trials into our lives in order to temper us, grow us in our faith. However other times we bring them on ourselves. According to the following verses what should we do to minimize the “self inflicted” famines in our lives?

John 15:4-5

Matt 11:28-30

As long as we are abiding in Christ there is nothing that can force us to be separate from Him. However, if we choose to willfully walk away from Him, our sin will creep in and form a wedge, separating us from God, until a time when we choose to turn back to our Lord and repent. At that moment, all distance that we created is gone! ***For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;¹²As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our Transgressions from us.*** Psalm 103:12.

Naomi, here, is choosing to return to the Lord, to His house, to His fullness. What a beautiful picture of God’s grace and endless mercy!

DAY #5 Read Ruth 1:8-14

Naomi’s trials were far from over. In her day, without a husband or sons to care for her, she was nothing. That’s what she was going back to Israel as – nothing. Certainly having these 2 young women returning with her would have been a comfort and a tremendous help to her. She had every right to keep them with her as they were legally part of her family. However that’s not what we see her doing.

- 1) Looking at the words of Naomi in verses 8-9, what kind of heart did she have towards her daughter-in-laws? What is her focus?

- 2) What is your heart towards others around you when you are going through trials? Where is your focus?

In these verses Naomi is releasing Orpah and Ruth from their duties and is willing to “go it alone” with the Lord. So often in my own life I want to “go it with the Lord” yet my prayer is that He will allow someone I love join in.

Perhaps Naomi’s love for these young ladies far outweighed her own fears and trepidations. She knew that if they stayed in Moab life for them would be far easier than if they accompanied her to Israel. In Moab they could find another husband. They would be accepted by their people. They would be content in the familiarity of their customs and gods. How totally opposite it would probably have been for them once in the borders of Israel... Or maybe this journey reminded Naomi of when her husband made the decision to move his family to a foreign land which is what started this whole chain of painful events in the first place. So not wanting to bring the same fate upon these women, she gave them the option of returning to their homes...

CHALLENGE: Have you ever been so concerned about being in the will of God when making a decision that you are willing to do anything, go anywhere, regardless of the impact it could have on your life? What happened?

- 3) What is the initial response of Orpah and Ruth according to verses 9-10?
- 4) After Naomi spells it out for them in verses 11-13, how do they respond?
- 5) Look up the following verses and comment on how they pertain to the situation here in Ruth

Joshua 24:15

Luke 18:18-23

Matthew 16:24-25

John 21:15-19

Orpah and Ruth were at a cross road. The choice they would make that day would affect not only the rest of their earthly lives but more importantly their eternal souls. Matthew 7:13-14 says “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Luke 14:26-28 says, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough to finish it*—“ Orpah made the popular, easy choice. She counted the cost and in her view it was too high. In a sense she cut her losses and went back to her old life – one which would ultimately lead to eternal destruction. Ruth on the other hand counted the cost and decided it was worth leaving the old behind. Out of love and loyalty she “clung” to Naomi - choosing the narrow, more difficult road which would ultimately lead to redemption.

When tough choices face you and your family, what will you choose... the way of the world? The popular, easy choices made by compromise and worldly wisdom? Or will you choose to seek God’s council and be obedient to His Word even when the rest of the world thinks you the fool for being “intolerant”, “exclusive”, or “narrow minded”. I pray that you will choose to cling to Jesus, no matter the cost. May you fall more in love with Jesus with every choice you make!